

What is claimed is:

1. A method of accessing data in a disk array  
5 comprising:
  - receiving a new user access request;
  - assigning the new user access request to a disk d of  
said disk array;
  - determining when the new user access request will be  
10 processed by examining extent size for requested data  
stored on disk d, wherein if the new user access request  
will be processed within a predefined period of time,  
placing the new user access request into a new user queue  
for disk d; otherwise, assigning the new user access  
15 request to another disk of said disk array.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein said another disk is up  
to three disks distant from disk d.
- 20 3. The method of claim 1 wherein, if said new user  
access request cannot be assigned to another disk, waiting  
a predefined period of time; and
  - assigning the new user access request to disk d.
- 25 4. In a video on demand system comprising a plurality of  
disks, where video information is striped across the  
plurality of disks, a method of accessing the video  
information comprising:
  - receiving a user access request for a next portion of  
30 video information required to present a streaming video  
sequence to the user;

assigning the user access request to a disk d of the plurality of disks that contains the next portion of video information;

determining when the user access request will be  
5 processed by examining extent size for said video  
information stored on disk d, wherein if the user access  
request will be processed within a predefined period of  
time, placing the user access request into a new user  
queue for disk d; otherwise, assigning the user access  
10 request to another disk of said plurality of disks.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein said another disk is up  
to three disks distant from disk d.

15 6. The method of claim 4 wherein, if said user access  
request cannot be assigned to another disk, waiting a  
predefined period of time; and  
assigning the user access request to disk d.